

CLAIMS

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A computer-based method for providing guidance to a purchaser for selecting an appliance that generally requires venting, the guidance including recommendations regarding a venting arrangement for the appliance, the method comprising:

5 providing a database for storing appliance-related information including a respective identifier for each appliance, the appliance-related information further including venting requirements data for each appliance;

10 configuring a vent wizard to provide a set of prompts over a communications network to elicit information from the purchaser regarding a respective appliance of interest to the purchaser, and vent parameters for the venting arrangement for the appliance;

accessing the database in view of the information supplied by the purchaser;
processing the information supplied by the purchaser relative to the vent requirements data for the appliance of interest to determine a recommendation to the
15 purchaser regarding suitability of the venting arrangement relative to the appliance of interest; and

transmitting the recommendation to the purchaser so that appropriate action may be taken by the purchaser regarding the selection of the appliance and/or venting arrangement.

20 2. The computer-based method of claim 1 wherein the processing of the information supplied by the purchaser relative to the vent requirements data comprises:

generating air flow data indicative of air flow supportable by the venting arrangement based on the vent parameters supplied by the purchaser;

25 comparing the air flow supportable by the venting arrangement relative to air flow actually required by the appliance of interest; and

determining the suitability of the venting arrangement for the appliance of interest based on the results of the comparison.

3. The computer-based method of claim 1 wherein the recommendation comprises indicating to the purchaser that the venting arrangement, based on the vent parameters supplied by the purchaser, is acceptable relative to at least one model for the appliance of interest.

5 4. The computer-based method of claim 1 wherein the recommendation comprises indicating to the purchaser that the venting arrangement, based on the vent parameters supplied by the purchaser, is marginally acceptable relative to at least one model for the appliance of interest.

10 5. The computer-based method of claim 1 wherein the recommendation comprises indicating to the purchaser that the venting arrangement, based on the vent parameters supplied by the purchaser, is unsuitable for the appliance of interest.

15 6. The computer-based method of claim 1 wherein the recommendation comprises indicating to the purchaser that the venting arrangement, based on the vent parameters supplied by the purchaser, is unsuitable to the appliance of interest, and further comprises indicating to the purchaser alternative appliance choices that would be suitable for the venting arrangement.

20 7. The computer-based method of claim 1 wherein the vent parameters are selected from the group consisting of length of the vent, number of turns along the vent, turn angle, and dimensions of a vent outlet cover.

25 8. The computer-based method of claim 1 wherein the recommendation comprises suggesting changes to the venting arrangement that would make that arrangement suitable to the appliance of interest.

30 9. The computer-based method of claim 1 further comprising issuing a document certifying that the venting arrangement, based on the vent parameters supplied by the purchaser, is acceptable relative to at least one model for the appliance of interest.

10. The computer-based method of claim 1 wherein the appliance is selected from the group consisting of a drier, a range hood, and exhaust fan.

11. A computer-based system for providing guidance to a purchaser for selecting an appliance that generally requires venting, the guidance including recommendations regarding a venting arrangement for the appliance, the system comprising:

a database for storing appliance-related information including a respective identifier for each appliance, the appliance-related information further including venting requirements data for each appliance;

a vent wizard configured to provide a set of prompts over a communications network to elicit information from the purchaser regarding a respective appliance of interest to the purchaser, and vent parameters for the venting arrangement for the appliance; and

a processor configured to access the database in view of the information supplied by the purchaser and process the information supplied by the purchaser relative to the vent requirements data for the appliance of interest to determine a recommendation to the purchaser regarding suitability of the venting arrangement relative to the appliance of interest.

12. The computer-based system of claim 11 wherein the processor configured to process the information supplied by the purchaser relative to the vent requirements data comprises:

a calculating module configured to calculate air flow data indicative of air flow supportable by the venting arrangement based on the vent parameters supplied by the purchaser;

a comparator configured to compare the air flow supportable by the venting arrangement relative to air flow actually required by the appliance of interest; and

a module configured to determine the suitability of the venting arrangement for the appliance of interest based on the results of the comparison.

13. The computer-based system of claim 11 wherein the processor configured to process the information supplied by the purchaser relative to the vent requirements data comprises:

5 a look-up table for supplying air flow data indicative of air flow supportable by the venting arrangement in response to the vent parameters supplied by the purchaser;

a comparator configured to compare the air flow supportable by the venting arrangement relative to air flow actually required by the appliance of interest; and

10 a module configured to determine the suitability of the venting arrangement for the appliance of interest based on the results of the comparison.

14. The computer-based system of claim 11 wherein the recommendation comprises indicating to the purchaser that the venting arrangement, based on the vent parameters supplied by the purchaser, is acceptable relative to at least one model for
15 the appliance of interest.

15. The computer-based system of claim 11 wherein the recommendation comprises indicating to the purchaser that the venting arrangement, based on the vent parameters supplied by the purchaser, is marginally acceptable relative to at least one
20 model for the appliance of interest.

16. The computer-based system of claim 11 wherein the recommendation comprises indicating to the purchaser that the venting arrangement, based on the vent parameters supplied by the purchaser, is unsuitable for the appliance of interest.

25 17. The computer-based system of claim 11 wherein the recommendation comprises indicating to the purchaser that the venting arrangement, based on the vent parameters supplied by the purchaser, is unsuitable to the appliance of interest, and further comprises indicating to the purchaser alternative appliance choices that would be suitable for the venting arrangement.

18. The computer-based system of claim 11 wherein the vent parameters are selected from the group consisting of length of the vent, number of turns along the vent, turn angle, and dimensions of a vent outlet cover.

5 19. The computer-based system of claim 11 wherein the recommendation comprises suggesting changes to the venting arrangement that would make that arrangement suitable to the appliance of interest.

10 20. The computer-based system of claim 11 further comprising a certifying module configured to issue a document certifying that the venting arrangement, based on the vent parameters supplied by the purchaser, is acceptable relative to at least one model for the appliance of interest.

15 21. The computer-based system of claim 11 wherein the appliance is selected from the group consisting of a drier, a range hood, and exhaust fan.

20 22. The system of claim 11 further comprising a module configured to communicate the recommendation to the purchaser so that appropriate action may be taken by the purchaser regarding the selection of the appliance and/or venting arrangement.